

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 03393

E.O.11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: NATO, MASS, XA, UR
SUBJECT: NATO STUDY OF WARSAW PACT CONVENTIONAL ARMS
TRANSFERS

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REFS: (A) STATE 71918, (B) USNATO 2728

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SUMMARY: SHARING AN INTEREST WITH THE US IN SOVIET ARMS
TRANSFER POLICY, FRANCE SUGGESTS THAT THE NATO ECONOMIC
DIRECTORATE PREPARE A STUDY BASED ON INFORMATION POOLED
THROUGH THE ECONOMIC COMMITTEE. WE SEE MERIT IN REACTING
POSITIVELY TO THE FRENCH PROPOSAL AND WOULD WELCOME
GUIDANCE BY APRIL 13. END SUMMARY.

1. AT MARCH 22 NAC THE AMBASSADOR DREW ON GUIDANCE REF A
TO NOTE THAT THE US HAS MADE CLEAR TO THE SOVIET UNION
ITS DESIRE FOR RESTRAINT IN THE TRANSFER OF ARMS TO
AFRICAN STATES. HE COMMENTED ON THE LACK OF A CONSTRUCTIVE
SOVIET RESPONSE AND SUGGESTED THAT SOVIET ARMS TRANSFER
POLICY MERITS SERIOUS DISCUSSION BY THE NAC. FRENCH PERM-
REP TINE CALLED ON THE AMBASSADOR APRIL 3 TO SAY THAT US
COMMENT HAD "AROUSED INTEREST" IN PARIS. GOF WISHES TO
TAKE A CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH, EVEN THOUGH FRANCE IS
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GENERALLY OPPOSED TO DISCUSSION AT NATO OF CONVENTIONAL
ARMS TRANSFER POLICY. SOVIET TRANSFERS PER SE MUST BE A
MATTER OF CONCERN. PARIS WOULD THEREFORE PROPOSE THAT
NATO ECONADS EXCHANGE INFORMATION ON WHAT WARSAW PACT
NATIONS ARE DOING WORLDWIDE AND HOW THEY GO ABOUT THE
PROCESS OF ARMS TRANSFERS. NATO'S ECONOMIC DIRECTORATE
COULD THEN PRODUCE A PILOT STUDY, FROM WHICH CONCLUSIONS

COULD BE DRAWN FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION.

2. TINE SAID HE WAS PASSING THE FRENCH IDEA ALONG TO US FOR CONSIDERATION AND WASHINGTON REACTION AND WAS NOT PLANNING TO MAKE A FORMAL PROPOSAL TO NATO AT THIS TIME.

3. COMMENT: NEITHER THE PROPOSAL ITSELF NOR THE FRENCH DESIRE TO USE THE ECONOMIC COMMITTEE FOR THE STUDY IS PARTICULARLY SURPRISING. ECONADS HAVE REGULARLY DEALT WITH SOVIET AND EASTERN EUROPEAN ARMS TRANSFERS TO THE THIRD WORLD WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF ONGOING STUDIES OF SOVIET AID TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THREE YEARS AGO FRANCE SUGGESTED THAT NATO LOOK MORE CLOSELY AT SOVIET AND EASTERN EUROPEAN ARMS TRANSFERS (75 USNATO 6183), AND HAS REMAINED ACTIVE IN ECONOMIC COMMITTEE WORK ON LDC ISSUES. WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD RESPOND POSITIVELY TO THE FRENCH SUGGESTION. AT THE LEAST, A STUDY SHOULD PERMIT A MORE GENUINE REVIEW IN NATO OF QUESTIONS RELATED TO CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS THAN HAS TAKEN PLACE IN THE PAST, AND WE ANTICIPATE THE ECONADS REPORT WOULD COME BEFORE THE NAC. THE ECONOMIC COMMITTEE PROBABLY COULD ADAPT ITS PRIORITIES TO PERMIT SUCH A STUDY IN THE NEAR FUTURE IF MEMBER NATIONS WOULD BE PREPARED TO SHARE SUFFICIENT INFORMATION TO MAKE SUCH A STUDY MORE MEANINGFUL THAN THOSE PREVIOUSLY UNDERTAKEN.

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4. ACTION REQUESTED: TINE WILL BE AWAY FROM NATO UNTIL APRIL 13. WE WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO PROVIDE HIM WITH WASHINGTON'S REACTION UPON HIS RETURN. BENNETT

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